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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000719

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV; USPACOM FOR FPA  
COMMERCE FOR ITA JEAN KELLY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: ETHNICS HOPING AGAINST HOPE

REF: A. RANGOON 714 (NOTAL)

[B.](#) RANGOON 601

CLASSIFIED BY: COM CARMEN M. MARTINEZ FOR REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

[¶1.](#) (C) SUMMARY: THE NATIONAL CONVENTION (NC) RESUMED JUNE 7 AFTER A TWO-DAY RECESS. THOUGH THE SPDC'S EMPTY PROMISES TO RE-EXAMINE THE 104 PRINCIPLES HAVE LEFT THE ETHNIC CEASE-FIRE GROUPS (CFGS) RATHER FRUSTRATED, THE CFGS PARADOXICALLY STILL HOPE FOR SOME DELIVERABLES ON THE SHARING OF POWER IN THE NEW CONSTITUTION. HOWEVER, THE ETHNICS, WHO HAVE BY DEFAULT BECOME THE ONLY VOICE OF POTENTIAL CRITICISM AT THE NC, ADMIT THEY EXPECT VERY LITTLE FROM THE NC, WHICH MAY ADJOURN IN LATE JUNE FOR A TWO-MONTH BREAK. END SUMMARY.

BACK ON THE RESERVATION

[¶2.](#) (C) WEEK FOUR OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION BEGAN JUNE 7 WITH ALL DELEGATES RETURNING TO THE NYAUNG HNI PIN NC SITE AFTER 700 OF THEM TOOK THEIR FIRST WEEKEND RECESS SINCE THE NC STARTED. CFG REPRESENTATIVES IN RANGOON TELL US THEY ARE UNHAPPY THE SPDC HASN'T ALLOWED OPEN DEBATE OF THE 104 PRINCIPLES AND SIX OBJECTIVES AS WAS HOPED PRIOR TO THE CONVENTION START (REF B). THE NEW MON STATE PARTY (NMSP) AND THE KACHIN INDEPENDENCE ORGANIZATION (KIO) CFGS EVEN SENT A LETTER TO THE NC COMMISSION ASKING FOR A REVIEW OF THE 104 PRINCIPLES BUT WERE REBUFFED. IN THE END THE CFGS AVOIDED CONFRONTING THE SPDC, AND THOUGH PREVIOUSLY MUCH-DISCUSSED, DID NOT USE THE WEEKEND RECESS TO STAGE A BOYCOTT OR SIT-OUT.

WHAT DISSENT CHANNEL?

[¶3.](#) (C) ETHNIC LEADERS TELL US THAT BY DEFAULT, THE CFGS IN THE "SPECIAL INVITED GUESTS" DELEGATE CATEGORY HAVE BECOME THE ONLY DELEGATES AT THE NC WILLING TO BE CRITICAL OF THE SPDC OR VOICE INDEPENDENT THOUGHT. HOWEVER, ONE DELEGATE IN THE "POLITICAL PARTY" CATEGORY, AN MP-ELECT EXCOMMUNICATED FROM THE NLD, TOLD US HE AND THE OTHER HANDFUL OF EX-NLD DELEGATES ARE TRYING TO IMPLEMENT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE NLD DURING THE CONVENTION, SINCE THEY WERE ELECTED ON THE NLD TICKET IN 1990. HOWEVER, UNLIKE THEIR CFG CO-DELEGATES WHO CAN COMMUNICATE WITH ETHNIC LEADERS IN RANGOON BY SATELLITE PHONE AND COURIER, THESE EX-NLD DELEGATES HAVE HAD NO OFFICIAL CONTACT WITH, AND RECEIVE NO INSTRUCTIONS FROM, ANYONE OUTSIDE OF THE REMOTE NC COMPOUND.

STATES RIGHTS!

[¶4.](#) (C) THE 19 CFGS HAVE JOINTLY SIGNED A PAPER TO BE SUBMITTED THIS WEEK TO THE NC WORKING COMMITTEE FOR WRITING CHAPTERS 4, 5, AND 6 DRAFTING GUIDELINES. THESE CHAPTERS WILL ADDRESS SHARING OF POWER BETWEEN THE STATES AND THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FOR THE LEGISLATIVE, EXECUTIVE, AND JUDICIARY FUNCTIONS. THE CFGS ARE SEEKING FORMAL AUTONOMY IN CULTURE, RELIGION, EDUCATION, AND LAW. HOWEVER, THE KIO VICE CHAIRMAN MAJ GEN ZAU SEIN, DOES NOT REALLY EXPECT THE NC WORKING COMMITTEE TO INCORPORATE THE CFGS' DESIRED LANGUAGE IN THE FINAL GUIDELINE PAPER.

[¶5.](#) (C) UNDER THE SPDC'S SIX OBJECTIVES AND 104 PRINCIPLES, THE DRAFTING GUIDELINES WILL RESERVE 25 PERCENT OF POSITIONS IN THE FEDERAL, STATE/DIVISION, DISTRICT, AND TOWNSHIP-LEVEL LEGISLATIVE, EXECUTIVE, AND JUDICIAL BODIES FOR MILITARY OFFICERS. IN SPITE OF THIS, KIO LEADERS SAY THEY REMAIN HOPEFUL THAT THE SPDC WILL GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO TAKE HOME. IF IN THE END THEY DO GO HOME EMPTY-HANDED, THEY "WILL ASSESS THEIR OPTIONS AT THAT TIME." IF THE KIO FEELS THE PROCESS TOO UNDEMOCRATIC, THEY WILL CONSIDER NOT SENDING A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFTING COMMITTEE. (NOTE: THE NEXT STEP, DRAFTING THE CONSTITUTION, IS STEP TWO IN THE "ROAD MAP TO DEMOCRACY.")

SWIFTLY GO THE DAYS

[¶6.](#) THE SHAN STATE ARMY AND KIO LEADERS TELL US THE NC WORKING COMMITTEE WILL REVIEW THE CHAPTERS 4, 5, AND 6 DRAFTING GUIDELINE PAPERS AND WILL COMBINE THEM INTO ONE PAPER. THAT FINAL GUIDELINE PAPER WILL BE EDITED BY THE SPDC AND THEN PRESENTED TO THE NC PLENARY SESSION IN MID-JUNE FOR "COMMENT" AND APPROVAL. THE NC WILL LIKELY THEN ADJOURN FOR A FEW MONTHS. NEXT ON THE NC TO-DO LIST IS WRITING THE DRAFTING GUIDELINES FOR CHAPTER 7, WHICH WILL ESTABLISH THE CHIEF OF

THE ARMED FORCES AS THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF, AND WILL RESERVE THE RIGHT OF THE MILITARY TO TAKE POWER IF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF DEEMS THE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY TO BE UNSTABLE.

17. (C) COMMENT: THE CFGS EVIDENTLY HAVE REALIZED THAT THE SHARING-OF-POWER CHAPTERS 4, 5, AND 6 ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TO THEM, AND THEY HOPE THE DRAFTING GUIDELINES WILL CODIFY THE LONG-SOUGHT AUTONOMY FOR THEIR ETHNIC STATES. HOWEVER, THEY FULLY ADMIT THEY'RE UNABLE TO AFFECT SUCH A FAVORABLE OUTCOME -- AN ADMISSION THAT THE SR GEN THAN SHWE IS IN FULL CONTROL OF THIS PROCESS. SINCE THERE ARE NO PREPARATIONS FOR RESUMING ETHNIC INSURGENCY, MUCH LESS A BOYCOTT OF THE NC, FINAL DRAFTING GUIDELINES FOR A STRONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND WEAK DEPENDENT ETHNIC STATES CONTROLLED BY THE MILITARY SEEMS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION. END COMMENT.

MARTINEZ